

Theodor Nelson  
458 West 20th St.  
New York, N.Y. 10011



# ONTOLOGICAL-HYSTERIC THEATRE (R. FOREMAN)

**TOTAL RECALL** at Cinematheque  
80 Wooster St. Wed-Thurs-Fri.  
for 5 weeks beginning Dec 30.  
8.00 pm sharp (4 hours)  
Phone 724-1581. \$3 to \$1.

"OBIE" AWARD - 1970 [ELEPHANT STEPS]

"A play by Richard Foreman, IDA-EYED, was the single most incredible theatre piece of the year..." L. Eliscu: EVO

"The theatre of R. Foreman achieves through a remarkable perfection of form, the highest possible aesthetic intensity" J. Mekas: VOICE

Richard Foreman's TOTAL RECALL:



Preview Review: P. Adams Sitney



Reviews look back at the work. When the work, a play in this case, occurs in an unfamiliar corner of the city, without advertisement, without the gossip of reputation, without known actors, an audience that would want to see it once they had read a review of it runs the risk of learning the value of the play after it has passed. This then will be a preview review, and Foreman's earlier plays, ANGEL concerned with the hope of a pulse line of the vital arts in 1970's begins to manifest itself at the Cinematheque this winter.

Foreman's distinction is that the functions are inseparable in his work. The writer found first viewing they became one in the imagination in the author - may be too austere. The play depends upon the tactics of audience confrontations, as if a barrier had been eschewed the strategies of direct audiences, ignored them. One feels that his play would go on if not a person showed up to see it. Like canyons and rivers his plays repeat their existence.



a warning to those who have missed FACE and IDA-EYED, that anyone renaissance in theatre or with the America as the character of the cannot afford to miss TOTAL RECALL

twofold, as a writer and as a director. in his work. Before seeing one of his the scripts unreadable. But after the ecstatic texts, capable of production - director's style. For many this style fashionable direction in play production dience rape, an acceleration of severe to be surmounted before the ancient re-gedy could be reestablished. Foreman has attack. He has turned his back to the

Richard Foreman refers to his productions as 'ONTOLOGICAL-HYSTERIC THEATRE'. Ontology is the metaphysics of Being, the science of essence. Foreman's writing is ontological in its strategies of discarding the conventional attributes of drama: psychology, interaction of characters, plot, development. What, you may ask, can a play be after it has been stripped bare of these elements? The revelation of a series of states of being, or a single static state of being presented from a series of slightly modified perspectives. Despite the severity of its aesthetic means, a Foreman play is not without emotional power; in fact, it is all the stronger because of its rejection of the formula which we have come to think of as the basis of theatre. Like Bresson in his films, Foreman in his plays, creates an emotional dynamic through the suppression of emotionalism. A single force mounts throughout the duration of the play. At the end it substitutes apotheosis for climax.

But to call this drama 'hysterical' seems at first sight to be an identification through its opposite.

Everything in his plays happens in slow motion, with repetition, so that the collapse of a chair or the opening of a window or the flickering of a light becomes a momentous event in context.

The ontology is direct, we see CAUSALITY slowed down to its essence, THOUGHT to its core. The hysteria is implied. In all Foreman's dramas a series of characters are postulated. Beyond the play, in the imagination of the spectator, there is set up an echo of the character on the stage. We are given enough to imagine him in the mundane world. By hearing his deepest thought, we cannot help but fill in his more superficial desires, his daily disguises. What we have in this drama, obviously, is a complete reversal of the traditional process. We do not see the full bodied character and fathom his soul: we observe the presence of soul and imagine the characters.

The avant-garde artist is responsible to the whole of his tradition or to none of it. A compromise is impossible. The two personas of the advanced artist in our time are the intellectual and the naive. The paradigmatic figures of this polarity are Beckett and Genet, the secretary of Joyce, scholar of Proust, and the thief of Antwerp. Foreman is conscious of the radical methodology of art in our time; his route has been through reading and seeing. One can extract from his work echoes of Descartes, Gertrude Stein, Gurgieff, Husserl and Kurt Weil. Their structure and presentation recall the films of Robert Bresson and Michael Snow, Yvonne Rainer's dance, and Vsevolod Meyerhold's essays on theatre. Above all hover the Viennese ghosts of Robert Musil and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Yet beyond all influences and echoes a play by

Richard Foreman has an unmistakable identity. Each actor speaks as he thinks, uttering an open interior monologue even when trying to speak to another. The dynamics of the play do not depend upon the rhythms of confrontation. These are structural works, put together like a fugue, whose ultimate shape depends solely upon the orchestration of voices and appearances, repetitions and disappearances that the director has commanded. In any Foreman play you can be sure to find several doors, window, curtains, collapsible furniture, flickering lights and buzzers. These elements

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TOTAL RECALL will be the longest and most elaborate Foreman play yet produced. It is the second part of SOPHIA=(WISDOM). The initial section has not been produced yet, nor need one know it to understand TOTAL RECALL. In SOPHIA=(WISDOM) Ben has a vision of the Goddess Sophia which his wife cannot understand. The play postulates Ben's ecstasy in terms of a liberation from the solipsistic language of the other actors, which is a characteristic of Foreman's writing in general. That ecstasy finds its release as printed words appear on the back wall of the stage, incarnate beyond the body of any speaker. TOTAL RECALL recaptures the themes of the earlier play. Unlike it, it has no music. Here, Ben continues to have visions of Sophia ('Touch my body. My body is like a human being's mind.') In this part, subtitled 'The Return to Earth', the voices of the actors echo a disembodied tape. What Foreman has achieved has been a revolution in staging. See it.

TWO BENEFIT PERFORMANCES FOR THE  
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THE GRAND UNION

Becky Arnold  
Douglas Dunn  
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Barbara Lloyd  
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Yvonne Rainey

MONDAY JANUARY 4th EISNER-LUBIN AUD. - N.Y.U. \$2

PERFORMANCE STARTS AT 8:30

THE ONTOLOGICAL HYSTERIC THEATRE

TOTAL RECALL - R. FOREMAN

JANUARY 7,8 80 WOOSTER STREET TICKETS--\$1, \$2, \$3

PERFORMANCE STARTS AT 8:00